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Harvey Bennett is hugged by wife (l.) and Mark Kaminsky by friend, Airielle Kuhn (AP WIREPHOTO)

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Yanks expelled by Russians deny they worked for CIA

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NEW YORK (UPI) — Two American tourists, expelled from Russia after being held in detention there seven weeks, denied yesterday they were espionage agents working for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mark I. Kaminsky, 28, an Ann Arbor, Mich., schoolteacher who was convicted of spy charges in the Soviet Union, said, "I can say definitely that I was not a CIA agent."

Harvey C. Bennett, 26, of Bath, Maine, his travelling companion, added, "This report is completely false."

Syndicated columnist Drew Pearson had written yesterday that both had been working for the CIA when they were detained by Soviet authorities.

Kaminsky was sentenced to seven years in prison by a people's court in Kiev for alleged espionage, but was deported instead of serving the sentence. Bennett was detained for seven weeks in a Kiev hotel room as a material witness and testified at Kaminsky's trial.

Both men insisted they were only sightseeing in Russia and not guilty of "activities incompatible with those of a regular tourist," as the Soviets charged.

NOTES FOR BOOK

Bennett said the charges were filed "on the basis of what they found in a notebook which Kaminsky had. In it he had notes for a book he was writing."

Kaminsky denied that his notes or photographs he took on the trip constituted any violation of Soviet security, but merely were material he was gathering for a planned book tentatively entitled "The Soviets Talk About Peace And Prepare For War."

He said that what he saw during his trip convinced him that the Soviet Union was preparing for war, but did not elaborate.

PEOPLE FEAR WAR

"The people are definitely afraid of war," Bennett said. "They kept asking us why the United States wanted war."

Kaminsky said "I was worried for my life" while awaiting trial.

He said he had received a grant from the Northcraft Education Fund of Philadelphia for his trip to the Soviet Union. He said he was aided in getting the grant by the principal of Ann Arbor High School, whom he did not identify. Kaminsky taught Russian at the school. He said the Northcraft agency was "strictly an educational fund."

Bennett denied Soviet assertions that he had testified against Kaminsky.

"I testified at Mark's trial because under Soviet law I was required to," Bennett said. "But I did not testify against him and I hope that my testimony helped him."

He said that both had been guides at the U.S. exhibition in Moscow last year, and that they went to Russia "because we were interested in seeing if any changes had taken place in the country."

The Soviet people and improve our command of the Russian language."

They said they had met in Japan in 1953 while serving with the U.S. Air Force.

MET BY FRIEND

Kaminsky was met at the airport by a friend, Miss Airielle Kuhn, 25, of Grosse Pointe, Mich., a Detroit suburb. She was accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Frank Kuhn.

Bennett was met by his wife, Rena, 26, who remained in Bath with their three children while he went to Russia.